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ABSTRACT

Vocational education is being asked to assist in defense preparedness as a deterrent to war and, if necessary, in war itself. As citizens, but also as educators, vocational educators particularly must examine the ethical questions concerned with that role. First, they should examine the criteria for a just war, and then consider the values inherent in the meanings of the concepts "education" and "vocation" as they relate to this ethical issue. Vocational educators should be aware of the need to think critically about the values of our society and to teach their students to think critically--although such a course is often not popular. The traditional definition of "vocation" involves a commitment to a life's work, particularly a divine or spiritual calling to a state in life. Vocational educators need to consider how that definition squares with their teaching of vocational education--is it merely passing on skills, or are there ethical and moral values to be considered? Along with the nature of vocation, educators must examine the nature of education; philosophers have imbued education with the preparation for the "good life," not just skill training. As vocational education moves to prepare more students for careers related to military preparedness, these ethical issues become more important. They are issues that must be examined in professional journals, in meetings, and in everyday practice. (KC)

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Vocational Education: The Latest Military Recruit?

by George H. Copa*

Patriotism is a virtue which we can only give freely as citizens of a country. It means that as citizens we have respect, honor and hope for our country. But, with this very love and loyalty also comes a responsibility to carefully and regularly examine how our country deals with its people and with the people of other countries. In the context of this paper, we must ask, "Is our country living up to its full potential as an agent of peace with justice for all people?" And, "What is an appropriate role for vocational education in striving for this full potential?"

Ethics of Defense

I look upon defense policy as having a purpose of defending peace with justice -- this should be and I believe is the basic nature of military service as a vocation. Those who enter the military service in loyalty to our country should, with pride, view themselves as custodians of the security and freedom of the rest of us who do not so serve. As they carry out their vocation, they are contributing to the growth and maintenance of peace. I am indeed grateful for the service and, at times, immense personal sacrifice so many have made as part of the military in the past to preserve the "peace of a sort" we enjoy today.

With this introduction said and firmly believed, I will begin probing some ethical dimensions of vocational education's role in defense preparedness. If I am true to ethical analysis, I will raise some often unasked but important

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questions. These questions will be questions of values -- moral questions which are uniquely human. Further, I hope to illustrate the benefit of ethics as a means to systematically and creatively addressing questions of this nature.

I will start first with some ethical questions about the role of the military -- particularly with the ethics of war and the use of defense preparedness as a deterrence to war. My logic for starting here is that vocational education is being asked to contribute to the defense preparedness of our country. I have suggested that the purpose of this defense preparedness is to defend the peace with justice for all. It seems the critical, "bottom line," ethical question here is, "When is war an appropriate response to defending the peace?" This is an essential question to those whose vocation is that of military service and, I would maintain, of those who educate for this vocation and those who, although not formally in the military service, work at occupations which support defense preparedness.

In response to this question, that of a just-war, I will turn to a Pastoral Letter on War and Peace formulated by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (1983). I use it because it is a recent address of the issue involving a seemingly thorough analysis and synthesis of alternative ideas and positions, both religious and secular, in the context of our current world situation. As astutely noted in the Pastoral Letter and in ethical theory, the position taken is dependent on current and projected circumstances; as circumstances change, the position may well have to be modified. Another reason for selecting this specific reference is that it represents a reasonable model for the process and outcome of addressing an ethical issue by a professional group.

If one were then to ask the value question, "When is war a just response to defending the peace?", what would an ethical response look like? The National Conference of Catholic Bishops (1983, 28-31) chose to lay out a set of reasoned

criteria for a just-war as follows:

1. Just cause -- war is permissible only to confront a "real and certain danger", for example, to protect innocent life, to preserve conditions necessary for decent human existence, and to secure basic human rights.
2. Competent authority -- war can be declared only by those with responsibility for public order; the issue of who constitutes competent authority remains perplexing.
3. Comparative justice -- war involves violence, destruction, suffering and death; war is justified only when the rights and values being protected are critical enough to override these costs; no country should act as if it has "absolute justice" on its side.
4. Right intention -- war can be used only for the reasons specified above under "just cause".
5. Last resort -- for war to be justified, all peaceful alternatives must have been exhausted.
6. Probability of success -- war should not be an irrational resort to force or hopeless resistance when the outcomes of either will clearly be disproportionate or futile.
7. Proportionality -- the damage to be inflicted and the costs incurred by war must be proportionate to the good expected by taking up arms.

In order for war to be a just response, all of the above criteria must be met by the situation in the view of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Given that war is at times ethical, a next question for our purposes here is, "To what extent is it then ethical to build a defense preparedness as a deterrence to war, particularly as this preparedness includes increased nuclear capacity?" Deterrence is taken to mean, "dissuasion of a potential adversary from initiating an attack or conflict, often by the threat of unacceptable reta-

liatory damage" (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, p. 51). The Catholic Bishops of the United States again respond affirmatively, if certain ethical principles are enforced. These principles include:

1. Discrimination -- the immunity of non-combatants from direct attack as a means of deterrence (this is particularly a problem for nuclear weapons as a part of deterrence strategy).
2. Proportionality -- the war-fighting capabilities of countries should remain within some balance.

In a nuclear age, these principles of deterrence are thought of as strictly conditional for the short term; for long term peace, they must lead to reduction in war-fighting capabilities, especially of nuclear weapons.

These considerations about a just-war and deterrence are of an ethical nature. Each of the posed criteria or principles can, in turn, be subject to further ethical analysis. The point here is that these issues involve moral considerations, they are decided by us (or others acting for us); if they are not decided actively, they are decided de facto. Ethical analysis can be used to develop criteria for resolving these issues in creative, systematic and reasoned ways. Vocational education is being asked to assist in defense preparedness as a deterrence to war and, if necessary, war itself. Even as citizens, but certainly as educators, particularly vocational educators, we are obligated to examine for ourselves if what we are to assist in is itself ethical. I will turn next to the values inherent in the meanings of the concepts "education" and "vocation" as they relate to this ethical issue.

Ethics of Education

The question of what counts as a vocation or as education, of what it implies when these terms are used to label an activity, are questions of

meaning; they involve matters of choice. As noted by Wilson (1963), "words are meant to serve human purposes and desires, and must be used in such a way as to serve them efficiently" (p. 6). We want words to do some work for us -- to stand for something that is commonly understood and agreed upon. But, it is a mistake to think that words mean only one thing, that there is the definition; rather, the meaning given a word depends on one's point of view and the uses to which the word is to be put. Terms such as "education" and "vocation" have values built into them -- they are purposeful activities. As suggested by Wilson, in what follows I am asking you to "become self-conscious about words which hitherto we had used without thinking -- not necessarily used wrongly, but used unself-consciously. This is rather like the process of psychoanalysis, or the self-examination and confessions practiced in religion...(we are) asked to become aware of the significance of our words" (p. 14).

First, lets bring the word "education" to front and center stage. What does (or should) it mean to educate? Several writers have addressed this question (e.g., Dewey, Soltis, Scheffler, Peters, Passmore, Ryle); however, in the interest of time, I will focus on only two here, Peters and Passmore. I chose these writers because they very specifically address the concept of education and particularly focus on its ethical dimension. As I address the meaning of education, remember we use it often to label what we do.

Peters (1967, 1973) is explicit in noting that the definitive characteristics of what is education involve consideration of both its process and its outcomes -- or what he calls task and achievement criteria, respectively. As such, there is no one process of education nor one outcome but rather a family of processes which initiate the development of multiple outcomes. A second important characteristic of education is that it is inseparable from making judgments of value -- in order to give meaning to education, one is committed to

making moral judgments about its legitimate procedures (tasks) and about what is worth-while to be learned (achievements). The latter judgment about worthwhileness addresses the priorities assigned to all possible achievements in the context of limited resources and the aim of producing an "educated person" (i.e., Is national defense more important than the world food shortage? Are technical achievements more important than moral achievements?). What is most important to pass from one generation to the next?

The criteria suggested by Peters for judging what are worthwhile educational achievements or outcomes are as follows. First, an educated person must be capable of pursuing an activity (i.e., science, cooking, typing) "for what there is in it as distinct from what it may lead on to or bring about" -- they are able to "delight" in such things for their own sake. This criteria would suggest the need to examine the nature of the activity being taught -- is it possible for learners to enjoy the activity in vocational education programs for what it is at present? Second, an educated person, besides being skilled, must "possess some body of knowledge and some kind of conceptual scheme to raise this above the level of a collection of disjointed facts" -- they must have some "understanding of the 'reason why' of things." Without this understanding, the learner is likely to rely on "rules of thumb", and have difficulty with resolving exceptions and novel situations. Do vocational education programs for work related to national defense teach the "reason why"? Third, an educated person cannot be narrowly specialized -- the person must be able to see a connection in their activities to a coherent pattern of life. According to Peters, (1973), "we use the phrases 'trained in' and 'trained for' when we wish to talk about vocational, utilitarian, or specialized pursuits. We do not speak of a person being educated in, or for, or at anything in particular. This does not mean, of course, that an educated man must not be trained in something. It only rules

out the possibility of his being just trained" (p. 19). Are there any special ramifications of work related to national defense which can seriously affect one's other life roles? Are those ramifications treated in vocational education programs? Fourth, an educated person's knowledge and understanding must "permeate his way of looking at things" -- it must transform his total outlook. This outlook required an attitude of commitment to the value of knowing and the consistency between thought and action and an attitude of caring about the standards used in deciding what is known. To Peters (1973), "To be educated is not to have arrived, it is to travel with a different view. What is required is not feverish preparation for something that lies ahead, but to work with precision, passion, and taste at worthwhile things that lie to hand" (p. 20). What is the view that vocational education leaves with its students, particularly when that education is related to national defense?

The criteria for the task or procedures of education are, as already mentioned, that first, they not be morally objectionable; second that they be tailored to the development of the learner and that the learner have voice in what is being learned. How are these criteria to be handled in a vocational education program directed at work supportive of national defense?

Peters suggests that an important member of the family of educational procedures, particularly as it regards ethical considerations is the transmission of critical thought. He suggests that critical thought is the opposite of indoctrination (as might more likely be the case with training). Emphasis is needed on this process because there seems to be a human tendency to inertly believe what is heard, seen or read. Passmore (1965) goes into much more detail concerning the teaching of critical thought. He describes critical thought as more a character trait than a skill -- there is need for the learner to be able to go beyond the "stock criticisms" on a given point. With critical spirit,

"...one must be alert to the possibility that the established norms themselves ought to be rejected, that the rules ought to be changed, the criteria used in judging performance modified. Or perhaps even that the mode of performance ought not to take place at all" (p. 19).

In our context here, this implies that vocational education's role in and means of supporting national defense must allow for serious criticism both in the policy forum and the classroom. Education which includes transmission of critical thought must do so through example of its teachers and the general atmosphere of the education place. According to Passmore, "A child will be encouraged to be critical only if he finds that both he and his teacher can be at the same time called upon to defend what they say -- to produce, in relation to it, the relevant kind of ground" (p. 198).

In order to be critical, however, learners must already have some knowledge; the issue which emerges, particularly as the amount of "instructable rules grow", is when to make time for developing critical thought. One response is to postpone such development to the later stages of education, even to graduate education at a university and then give it to only a select few who are sufficiently "mature" to handle it. But then as Passmore points out, how does one respond to Plato's reference to Socrates' point, "an unexamined life is not worth living". There is really not an a priori way of knowing if the majority of people are capable of being educated critically. However, it seems the risk must be taken particularly if one claims to be a democrat which involves being, "... committed to believing that the majority of people are capable of participating at some level in discussions which lead to a change of rules, i.e., that they are capable of thinking critically about, as distinct from simply obeying, the rules" (p. 204).

Passmore's solution has already been acknowledged; critical thought, "...is

not a subject in the sense in which chemistry or technical drawing or history are subjects. It can be fostered, or it can be discouraged, as part of the teaching of any subject -- even if some subjects provide more opportunities for doing so, at least at an early stage, than others. A student may exhibit it as a translator, but not as a mathematician; as a landscape gardener but not as a historian" (p. 204). Most children, even the less intelligent can be taught about critical discussion.

However, Passmore issues a warning to those who would accept this educational process lightly, "Anybody who sets out to teach his pupils to be critical must expect constantly to be embarrassed. He can also expect to be harassed, by his class, by his headmaster, by parents. If he gives up the idea of teaching his pupils to be critical and salves his conscience by training them in skills, this is not at all surprising. But he should at least be clear about what he is doing, and even more important, what he is not doing" (p. 209).

Given the above meaning for education, if one is to engage in education to enhance defense preparedness, it is necessary to engage the learner in the "reason why" of this education. The teacher must always be ready to produce legitimate reasons why the education is taking place. Why defense preparedness? To respond seriously, the teacher must have considered an ethical perspective such as supplied earlier from the National Council of Catholic Bishops. How many professional educators, even of those who are leading the move to position education as necessary to sound national defense, could articulate such a set of reasons?

Least one think that the response is straightforward, consider the following statement which might be made in response to the Bishops' criteria for just-war by a student practicing the critical thought I have just described. Assume the student has read Daniel Shaughnessy's book entitled War on Hunger

(Maguire, 1978) in which he helps us in the United States to visualize the billions who see our prosperity but do not enjoy it. Maguire phrased these thoughts especially well in writing, "He scales the world population down to a village of 1,000 people. Of these, 700 are nonwhite, 570 are Asian, 100 African, 50 South American and only 60 are the United States. Five hundred of the villagers are chronically hungry, and half of these are suffering debilitating malnutrition. Eight hundred live in shacks or mud huts less commodious than those provided for animals in the United States. The 60 United States people receive half the total village income, use 30 per cent of the village's energy, and have obesity as a major health problem" (p. 32). The student asks simply, "How do you as an educator justify using education to enhance the defense preparedness of our country for a just-war in this circumstance? How can you even speak of a just-war?" How would you respond?

Or what if another student, also critical, but not so knowledgeable of world affairs, but well read on our domestic situation, made another statement followed by a question. The student claims that given the size of our present defense budget, we are spending the equivalent of 40 million dollars per hour on defense preparedness in the United States (in less than one day, more than the current total federal outlay for vocational education). And, we do this in the face of millions who live below the poverty level of income with all its attendant consequences in this country. The student simply asks, "How do you justify education to enhance defense preparedness in such unfathomable disproportions to enhancing opportunity for a more equitable distribution of living conditions in our country?" The student has read Ken Keyes' book entitled, The Hundredth Monkey (1982) which quotes Dwight Eisenhower, general and president, in 1953 as saying, "every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in a final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed --

those who are cold and are not clothed . . . This world in arms is not spending money only -- it is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the houses of its children" (p. 82). As educator, how would you respond? These are serious ethical questions being raised about the role of education in relation to defense preparedness. Further, they are legitimate questions, questions to be encouraged, by one striving to meet the criteria of being worthy of the name educator.

Ethics of Vocation

The going is no less easy by claiming one is merely a vocational educator. For, the meaning of vocation can also be saturated with meaning of a very ethical nature. Dewey (1916) defines vocation as, "nothing but such a direction of life activities as renders them perceptibly significant to a person, because of the consequences they accomplish, and also useful to his associates" (p. 307). A vocation thereby includes activities that have consequences that are significant to the individual doing them and to others. What are the consequences for individual and others of the work involved in defense preparedness? Dewey claims that the consequences should be such as to give direction or a sense of ends, order and planfulness to an individual's life.

In the context of discussing vocation, Dewey goes on to propose that an ideal society would be one in which, "...every person shall be occupied in something which makes the lives of others better worth living, and which accordingly makes the ties which bind persons together more perceptible -- which breaks down the barriers of distance between them. It denotes a state of affairs in which the interests of each in his work is uncoerced and intelligent; based on its congeniality to his own aptitudes" (p. 316). Is it possible for work related to national defense to meet these tests of vocation?

If one looks back at the historic meaning of vocation in Western culture it is often traced back to the Bible. The Oxford English Dictionary (1961) lists as its first definition of vocation, "the action on the part of God of calling a person to exercise some special function, especially of a spiritual nature, or to fill a certain position; divine influence or guidance toward a definite (esp. religious) career, the fact of being directed toward a special work in life; natural tendency to, or fitness for, such work" (p. 278). This tight connection between morality and vocation is interesting, especially in the context of defense preparedness. From biblical times the more historical meaning of vocation has been allowed to drift to where, especially in the United States, ordinary work has been separated from vocation (Calhoun, 1954). In commenting on the latter developments in this historical evolution, Michaelson (1954) states, "...out of the background of Protestantism and the pressure and challenges of the environment, the American has formulated an independent ideal which might be labeled 'Yankee Enterprise' or the 'American Gospel of Work'. Thus the early Protestant ideal of capturing the world of work for the glory of God was replaced by the 'Yankee' ideal of working for man's glory -- or for one's own enhancement. Christian vocational became secularized. A Protestantism which set out to 'spiritualize commerce' became so corrupted by the pressures of practical economics that it ended up by 'commercializing the spirit'" (p. 117). He concludes his analysis by noting, "There is much power in a meaningful philosophy of work and vocation, but its real value depends upon what it stresses as the source of motivation and the goals of work" (p. 154). What is the source of motivation and goals for work related to national defense? Again, would this work qualify for the label vocation? How so?

As vocational education considers its role in enhancing defense preparedness, what are the major vocations being addressed? They would seem to fall in

two broad categories: (1) those actually occupied in the military service and (2) those in the public or private sector occupied with providing the supplies and support services (military-industrial complex or now better termed the military-government-industrial complex) needed for defense preparedness (see March, 1983, issue of VocEd focused on "Defense Preparedness and Vocational Education"). This latter group can get very large (e. g., to include vocational education teachers, teacher educators, those doing research to improve vocational education). Do these occupations meet Dewey's criteria for vocations? How does this ordinary work "square" with the historical meaning of vocation as a calling to exercise some special function?

Dealing more specifically with the ethics of the relationship of vocation in the more religious sense and ordinary work, Frankena (1976) handles the distinction between vocation as divine calling and vocation as ordinary work by labeling the former a "super-vocation" and the latter as simply "vocation". He also distinguishes between a person's actual vocation and "true" vocation, the former being the vocation one has and the latter the vocation one should have had ideally.

Using this basis, Frankena goes on to form four different conceptions of the proper relation between vocation and super-vocation. In asking the question which of these four relations is ethically most acceptable, Frankena concludes that the answer largely depends on the assumed goal of the super-vocation. After some analysis, he takes this goal to be some combination of acting morally and pursuing "the good life". The latter is judged most important and defined as, "... the life one would prefer if one were clear-headed, logical, and fully knowledgeable about oneself and the world" (p. 401).

Frankena seems to be advising that vocation should be given direction and meaning by one's super-vocation (one's idea of the good and moral life). Although he does not expand on this point, he seems to imply that at times and

for certain situations it is in the interests of one's pursuit of the good life (as he has defined it) to act against the moral dictates of one's super-vocation. One is left to consider in what situations this might be appropriate. Is work related to national defense one of these situations?

Questions for Focused Dialogue

If I have been successful in my paper, the questions raised will not appear whimsical. They may however appear to be odd questions because they are often unasked. And, you should now wonder why that has been the case. Also, you should be able to appreciate that the answers to these questions do not just tumble out. They will require serious thought and reflection, dialogue among ourselves and with others will be essential. You should be thinking about whose interests ought be represented in the dialogue and these interests may be broader than you had ever thought about previously. You should already begin to sense that the issues to be addressed are ethical and will require coming to grips with the basic ethical questions (Frankena, 1973): (1) What is the nature of the good or right?, (2) Will this action (i.e., using vocational education to enhance defense preparedness) result in the most good?, and (3) Should I (we) take this action (the practical question)?

Let me conclude with some personal reflections on a recent movie perhaps many of you have seen, Silkwood. It is the story of Karen Silkwood who mysteriously disappeared when she was about to publically divulge safety violations in a plant manufacturing nuclear materials, some of which was of use directly or indirectly for defense preparedness. In trying to collect the evidence and get others to listen to her story, none of her co-workers were willing to take the risk or even give her personal support in her actions. In fact, they probably betrayed her actions in the end. As it turns out, there were serious

safety violations at the plant but, more seriously, nuclear materials essential to making nuclear bombs were being sold and distributed to several other countries who now have nuclear capabilities. The question posed in the movie to us is, "Who killed Silkwood?" Here is a person facing an ethical issue in her ordinary work. She is not even aware of the vast and irreversible consequences (some of which are yet to be played out for us or our children) of the issue she is confronting. The question to myself and now to you is, "Did vocational education contribute to the killing of Karen Silkwood?" The Karen Silkwoods' and Lieutenant Marvin Calley's of tomorrow are perhaps in our vocational education classes today. We are moving as a field to do even more education for these vocations. What is our position on the proper meaning of peace with justice for all? What ethical meaning do we give to our name, vocational education? Is this meaning best revealed by what we exclude from the content of our programs? Do we have the courage and capability to deal with ethical issues in a way that would merit the public trust that should go with the label, educator. Do we censure ourselves and those beyond our profession when it is appropriate. How does this show itself in our professional journals, in our professional meetings and seminars, and in our every day practice.

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